Journal of Language and Literature
Vol. 26 No. 2, October 2026, pp. 326-338
DOI: 10.24071/joll.v26i2.671
Available at https://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/JOLL/index

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Meaning-Making in Invitations in Global Englishes: A Cross-Cultural Systemic Functional Study of Indonesian and Yemeni EFL Learners

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Abstract

The current paper deals with the meaning making in invitations via speech acts in the framework of SFL, specifically interpersonal metafunction, comparing the strategy use among Indonesian and Yemeni EFL learners. This paper aims at examining cultural pragmatics as a way for choosing linguistic options while performing English invitations as an International Language. The research is descriptive in its nature; it makes use of the quantitative data collected auprès de sixty students of EFL (30 Indonesians and 30 Yemenis at the undergraduate level). To collect data on how to invite, a Discourse Completion Task with five situationally-oriented invitations was used. Strategies were classified into direct/indirect and further coded as being based on particular grammatical forms. Results indicate some significant cross-cultural differences: Indonesian learners mostly chose indirect, modalized forms such as Yes/No questions or willingness markers, showing the features of mitigation. Yemeni learners prefer the use of direct strategies, namely imperatives, because such expressions can be regarded as solidarity statements in Yemeni sociocultural context. Pragmatic transfer from first languages was found in both groups. Invitation realization shows to be culturally bound and dependent on situational context.

Article information

Received: March 14, 2026

Revised: October 16, 2026

Accepted: October 17, 2026

***Keywords**: direct invitation, indirect invitation, SFL, Indonesian EFL learners, politeness, Yemeni EFL learners*

Introduction

The period of globalization and international cultural contacts calls into question the traditional view of English as a homogeneous system that is associated with the native speaker's usage of the language. Currently, English cannot be considered anymore as a closed system; instead, it is a set of culturally variable practices and usage types conducted by various users around the world. The dramatic spread of English – from a mere 4 or 5 million speakers at the time of seventeenth century to more than two billion speakers nowadays – resulted in the emergence of a multilingual linguistic landscape, where the majority of English speakers are non-native speakers of the language involved in transnational intercultural communication (Crystal, 2019). Thus, in the framework of Global Englishes paradigm, the focus shifts to English as a lingua franca spoken in Expanding Circles in the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) (Jenkins & Panero, 2024; Sadeghpour & D'Angelo, 2022).

In turn, the fields of English Medium Instruction (EMI) and Global Englishes embrace multilingual perspectives, counter ideologies of center-periphery relations, and emphasize teaching students as global communicators (Rose et al., 2022). All three approaches align with Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), a theoretical framework that views language as a socially embedded semiotic resource for meaning-making (Sembiante & Tian, 2021). In the cases of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and EMI, language is viewed in relation to content; thus, in such approaches, language and disciplinary knowledge, genres, and practices are inseparable.

In such a context, the concept of communicative competence moves beyond grammaticality to pragmatic and intercultural competencies. In general, speech acts like inviting, requesting, refusing, apologizing, and advising are typical for interpersonal communication and, therefore, are strongly influenced by culture-specific conventions and rules of politeness in the context of power dynamics and specific speech situations. Invitation is one of the most complex types of speech acts to perform since it presupposes successful alignment with the addressee.

Speech acts, in general, are communicative actions performed by speakers and interpreted by listeners. Rahayu (2021) and Teshaboyeva and Erkaboyeva (2025) define them as linguistic actions performed by speakers and interpreted by hearers. Yule (2022) introduces them as meaning in context in the field of pragmatics, while Austin (1975) emphasizes the total situation of a given speech act. Speech act theory offers explanations for communicative purposes based on locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts (Yule, 1996). While locutionary act is an expression of intention (illocutionary act) and perlocutionary act represents a communicative result of an utterance.

Politeness is essential to speech act performances. Drawing upon the work of Goffman (1967), Brown and Levinson (1987) developed the theory of face – positive face and negative face as the primary components of every individual's sense of self-esteem. According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p.70), negative face constantly gets into danger of being violated as many speech acts are inherently face threatening. Specifically, the authors emphasize that any kind of directive violates addressee's freedom of choice. As much as useful and intuitive the theory might appear, cross-cultural pragmatics disproves universalism and speech-act isolation.

Thus, for example, Dlali (2001) found that negative politeness strategies were not used consistently in isiXhosa, and speech act realization cannot be explained by the face framework. Similarly, Lu (2001) demonstrates that Sino-American speech act realization was governed by culture-specific communicative norms. Taken together, these results indicate that politeness systems were culture-dependent and not universal in nature.

Further support of the latter claim can be found in the analysis of Chinese discourse where Li and Wongwaropakorn (2024)

revealed that refusals represented as Chinese speech acts were affected by values of harmony, interpersonal sensitivity, and appropriateness of the situation. In other words, refusals as speech acts cannot be

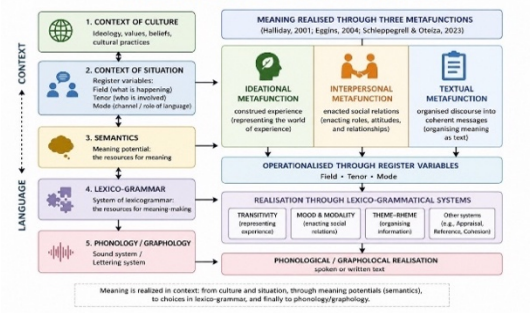


Figure 1. SFL Perspective: Language as a Multi-Stratal System

considered merely as rejection; they are subject to certain linguistic constraints, as well as cultural and interpersonal factors. Other Chinese studies also emphasized indirectness, modesty, and self-deprecation as strategies of face-management.

Nigerian home movie dialogue analyzed by Agbo et al. (2026) provided additional proof for the claim about the cultural dependence of speech act performance and politeness strategies since it revealed how certain speech acts like directives, expressives, and assertives were used to construct identities and negotiate hierarchies of authority. Therefore, speech acts should be regarded as socio-semiotic phenomena with clear ideological and discoursal roots.

Additional support of cross-cultural variability in pragmatic strategy choices comes from cross-cultural pragmatics studies on politeness strategies in Japanese, American, Arabic, and Indian communication. Japanese communication emphasizes such politeness aspects as indirectness and honorific stratification (Pizziconi, 2003); American discourse relies on clarity and directness (Jakučionytė, 2020); politeness in Arabic communication is characterized by honor-based strategies and elaboration of courtesies (Leech & Larina, 2014); and Indian communication involves hierarchical and relational norms depending on addressee's age and social status (Kapoor, 2022; Pandharipande, 1992).

Even online discourse shows high level of variability with respect to pragmatic performance, as shown by Rahmayanti et al. (2025). These researchers found that Indonesian YouTube personalities used speech acts, politeness strategies, and cooperation principle to establish rapport, engage the audience, and conduct interpersonal communication. Thus, pragmatic competence transcends face-to-face interaction and includes mediated and multimodal interaction.

Invitations as one of the subtypes of directives have particular importance as requests for future participation in various kinds of activities. They are inherently relational and culture-specific in their realization as well as depend on temporal, spatial, and interpersonal factors (Austin, 1975; Yule, 1996; Searle, 1979; Hancher, 1979). Invitations may vary in degree of sincerity and reality, going from real invitations to ostensible invitations (Wolfson, 1989; Isaacs & Clark, 1990; Al-Hamzi et al., 2023). Since invitations involve potential face concerns, politeness plays an integral part in their realization.

While the face theory of politeness provides necessary theoretical background for understanding the mechanisms of invitations performance, its fundamental assumptions of universality, speech-act isolation, and structural determinism are challenged by cross-cultural evidence (Dlali, 2001; Lu, 2001; Li & Wongwaropakorn, 2024). In other words, invitations are culturally-situated acts of interpersonal communication and require contextual, discoursal, and interactional analysis.

From a different perspective, SFL proposes to treat language as a semiotic system functioning according to ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions (Halliday, 1978; Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013; Schleppegrell & Oteíza, 2023). Interpersonal metafunction appears to be particularly important when analyzing invitations as relational actions (See the Diagram below). SFL-based approach is congruent with multilingual and culturally

sustaining pedagogy (Sembiante & Tian, 2021) and with CLIL/EMI methodology that integrates language and content (Llinares & McCabe, 2023).

Unfortunately, despite the availability of the SFL, Global Englishes, and pragmatic frameworks, research on invitations has rarely been conducted in EFL contexts (e.g., Indonesia and Yemen). The few studies available either focus on pragmatic transfer (Sukesti, 2014; Widanta et al., 2023; Al Marrani, Y. M. A. & Suraih, 2019; Al-Hamzi et al., 2020) or analyze the role of culture without SFL and Global Englishes (Agbo et al., 2026; Revita et al., 2025).

As seen above, the current state of the literature reflects a clear trend towards abandoning universalist theories of pragmatics in favor of a culture-oriented and ideologically informed perspective. In addition, it corresponds to the trends in Global Englishes and EMI that call for a multilingual pedagogy (Rose et al., 2022) and a culturally sustaining approach (Sembiante & Tian, 2021). Thus, a meaning-based rather than form-based approach should be adopted for studying pragmatics in global Englishes.

Against this background, the current study is intended to adopt a cross-cultural perspective and combine SFL and Global Englishes in the examination of the realization of invitations in EFL context of Indonesia and Yemen.

Methodology

This study employs a cross-cultural perspective based on SFL to examine the strategies used in inviting among Indonesian and Yemeni EFL learners in five different situational contexts. In doing so, this study mainly uses Systemic Functional Linguistics proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2013), specifically the interpersonal metafunction in which language is considered a tool in negotiating interpersonal relations, interpersonal roles, and interpersonal meanings through grammatical and lexicogrammatical selections such as mood and modality. Invitations, from this point of view, are taken into account as situation-specific speech acts, through which the speakers negotiate their interpersonal relations regarding power, social distance, familiarity, and politeness. Searle's (1979) Speech Act Theory provides a basis for categorizing invitation strategies, whereas Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle adds more insight into the interpretation of linguistic selections regarding politeness, directness, and mitigation.

The cross-cultural research design was used to identify similarities and differences between ways the English invitations are formed by EFL learners from Indonesia and Yemen. The choice of these two target populations gives a possibility to explore possible ways the communication practices specific for certain culture could influence learners' pragmatic behavior. Indonesian communication has been traditionally described as indirect, harmonious, and collectivist polite, while Yemeni communication practices could emphasize importance of hierarchical structure, respect, hospitality, and interpersonal solidarity. These general cultural orientations are considered as interpretive issues but not as fixed features of each individual learner. Thus, the focus is made on the linguistic behavior of participants and not on the cultural background which determines the type of invitation strategy used. Researchers' Indonesian and Yemeni background along with their common academic and linguistic interests have influenced the interpretation of the results from cultural perspective.

Participants for this study included 60 university-level learners of EFL from two universities; namely, Airlangga University of Indonesia and Al Mahwit, a university within Sana'a University of Yemen. These participants include 30 students from Indonesia and 30 students from Yemen. The ages of these participants were in the range of 21 to 25 years; their first languages were Indonesian and Arabic respectively and all of them had received formal training in English as a foreign language.

Data collection involved the administration of a Discourse Completion Test (DCT), which was a written task in which

five hypothetical social scenarios were created to evoke the use of English language invitations among the participants. Each scenario, as described in Appendix 1, set up a social context in which the participant was supposed to imagine him/herself in such a scenario and write an invitation in English using the words he/she might use in a real life situation. The five scenarios covered different interpersonal relationships:

a. Inviting a stranger: The participants were asked to visualize inviting an unknown person sitting next to them on a train to share their cake as they seemed hungry. The above situation depicts an invitation made to a stranger in a public place where the lack of any previous relationship might have affected the way it was offered.
b. Inviting classmates: Participants were required to visualize inviting their classmates to have breakfast with them in a college restaurant. The above situation depicted peer interaction with the participants having a previous relationship with each other.
c. Inviting the subordinates: The participants were asked to imagine themselves inviting their subordinates for an excursion to the city of Ibb or Malang. The hierarchy was used as the basis for this kind of relationship where the one who invites is superior to the others who are invited.
d. Inviting a neighbor: The participants were supposed to think of the conversation about the television film and then inviting a neighbor to watch the film at their place another time.
e. Invitation of a Teacher: The participants were asked to organize a party and invite their teacher. This case scenario included an interaction with someone who had a higher status in terms of institutional hierarchy and thus helped study invitations in this context.

With respect to that, the five scenarios helped in exploring how the participants would construct their invitation in various interpersonal relationships. Nonetheless, the scenarios were used as prompts for data collection as opposed to measures of the three constructs. The latter was taken into consideration while interpreting the responses.

The participants were told to read the scenarios carefully and imagine themselves in the scenarios and then write how they would make the invitation in English language. All participants were asked to complete the five prompts individually in the same conditions for collecting data. Since there were 60 participants who responded to the five prompts, a total of 300 responses were obtained through the DCT. The whole instrument is presented in Appendix 1.

In order to sort out the collected information while preserving the anonymity of the participants, each answer received a special code made up of a country code, a participant code, and a scenario code (for instance, ID-01-S1 and YE-10-S3). Such coding allowed sorting the answers by participant groups and scenarios without revealing personal information.

The answers were coded according to a structured codebook that relied on Speech Act Theory as outlined by Searle (1979), and the Interpersonal Metafunction of SFL. In addition, Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle was applied for analyzing the politeness elements in the data. The analysis concentrated on two levels: directness of the invitation, and linguistic realization of the latter.

In the first place, the answers were coded into direct/indirect invitations depending on the way of expression: direct invitations communicated the intent of the speaker in an explicit manner, while indirect invitations were realized through linguistic forms that carried the intent in the respective context.

On the second level, the linguistic realization of the invitations was investigated. Such constructions as imperatives, declaratives, performative utterances, yes/no questions, wh-questions, conditionals, expressions of willingness, and mitigated forms were singled out. Analysis of these categories facilitated understanding of the ways in which interlocutors utilized linguistic means in order to construct invitations and

maintain interpersonal relations. If necessary, the form-to-function relation was also taken into account in connection with the DCT scenarios.

There were six steps involved in the analysis of the data. In the first place, the 60 participants answered all five DCTs, leading to a total of 300 answers. Secondly, the answers were collected and categorized depending on participant group and scenario. Thirdly, every answer was analyzed to see whether it serves the purpose of an invitation based on Searle's Speech Act Theory that defines the difference between linguistic form and illocutionary force of the utterance. Fourthly, the invitations were classified according to their level of directness and linguistic form. Fifthly, the frequencies and percentages were counted for every category in order to summarize the distribution of invitation strategies. Finally, the answers provided by Indonesians and Yemenis were compared depending on the five scenarios.

All throughout the data analysis process, the answers provided by the participants were analyzed with respect to the social situations presented by the DCT scenarios. Specifically, emphasis was placed on the disparity in the use of invitations in cases where these were directed to strangers, classmates, subordinates, neighbors, and teachers. As such, the statistical descriptions were evaluated in light of the specific social situation as well as the theoretical perspective of the study.

Ethical standards were adhered to in the study. Participation was done voluntarily and participants were aware of what the research entailed. Responses were kept anonymous to ensure that the identity of participants was not compromised. Data collected was handled in a manner that was confidential and solely for the purpose of research.

Results and Discussion

This research explored the use of invitation strategies by Indonesian and Yemeni EFL learners in five systematically varied situational contexts through the use of SFL. According to SFL principles, invitations are not analyzed through their linguistic forms alone but rather through their meanings which are negotiated through the interaction between mood, modality, and contextual variables. As argued by Halliday and Matthiessen (2013) and Eggins (2004), meaning cannot be realized through linguistic forms but through their contextual interaction. Following the CLIL/EMI approach to SFL, language is understood as contextually grounded and meaning-driven action (Llinares & McCabe, 2023).

In all five situational contexts, there exists a clear distinction between Indonesian and Yemeni learners' construction of invitation strategies, with Indonesian learners using more indirect and modalized strategies and Yemeni learners favoring direct imperatives along with some indirect strategies in the form of interrogatives. Such a distinction indicates the presence of two different kinds of interpersonal orientation in English language use, one characterized by mitigation, deference, and negative politeness on the part of Indonesian learners, and immediacy, affiliation, and solidarity on the part of Yemeni learners. In SFL terms, these differences can be interpreted in terms of tenor, in which different uses of mood and modality are understood as cultural practices (see Table 1).

Table 1. Analysis of Invitation Strategies Used by Indonesian and Yemeni EFL Learners

Invitation Strategy	SFL Mood Type	Speech Role (SFL)	Modality / Politeness Orientation	Key Domain Variables (Power, Distance, Familiarity)	Indonesian EFL Learners	Yemeni EFL Learners	Interpersonal Meaning Constructed
Imperative	Imperative	Demand functioning as Offer	Low modality; direct	Used mainly with equal or close interlocutors	Rare (2% overall); marked and mitigated	Dominant (46.68%); common across all	Solidarity and generosity (Yemeni); potential

Invitation Strategy	SFL Mood Type	Speech Role (SFL)	Modality / Politeness Orientation	Key Domain Variables (Power, Distance, Familiarity)	Indonesian EFL Learners	Yemeni EFL Learners	Interpersonal Meaning Constructed
					when used	power relations	imposition (Indonesian)
Yes/No Question	Interrogative	Offer	Medium modality; negotiation	Common in equal and higher-status contexts	Most frequent (41.98%); often with polite markers	Second most frequent (26.66%); fewer mitigators	Negotiated consent and face-saving
Wh-question	Interrogative	Offer	Medium–high modality	Used with familiar interlocutors	Moderate use (10.66%)	Minimal use (2%)	Shared reasoning and soft invitation
Willingness	Modulated Interrogative	Offer	High modality; deference	Sensitive to power and distance	Highly preferred (30.68%)	Limited use (8.66%)	Respect for addressee's autonomy
Declarative	Declarative	Statement-as-offer	Medium modality	Often used with higher-status invitees	Limited (4%)	Moderate (10%)	Indirect offer; reduced face threat
Performative	Declarative (explicit)	Offer	Context-dependent	Formal or institutional contexts	Rare (3.98%)	Moderate (6%)	Explicit invitation framing
Conditional	Declarative + Modality	Offer	High mitigation	Hypothetical or tentative contexts	Very limited (1.98%)	Almost absent (0.66%)	Minimization of imposition
Hoping	Declarative + Modality (inclination)	Offer	Very high politeness	Higher-status invitees	Low but present (5.32%)	Absent (0%)	Maximum face protection

These differences are further substantiated by a quantitative comparison of invitation strategies used by both groups. While Indonesian learners used Yes/No interrogatives most frequently (41.98%), followed by willingness (30.68%), Yemeni learners used imperatives more often (46.68%). Such a comparison shows a clear difference (see Figure 1) in the use of grammatical devices, which in turn suggests a different understanding of interpersonal relations in English by the two groups. In terms of Global Englishes theory, such differences are expected due to the fact that English is considered a multilingual resource whose uses are socially and culturally determined (Jenkins & Panero, 2024; Rose et al., 2022).

An integrated analysis of the five situational contexts reveals a consistent interplay between power relations, familiarity, and culturally grounded norms in shaping invitation strategies among Indonesian and Yemeni EFL learners (see Appendix 1). Across all situations, both groups systematically adjust their pragmatic choices; however, they differ markedly in the degree of indirectness, the preferred grammatical realizations, and the interpersonal meanings encoded in their utterances.

For Situation 1, subjects had to invite an unknown individual at their own social level in a public environment. The Indonesian students tended to use indirect approaches such as modal questions and willing expressions like "Would you like to eat these together?" and "Do you want to eat this cake with me?". These approaches were usually used in combination with politeness expressions like excuse me and please, which made the offer less imposing and recognized the addressee's right to say no. From the SFL point of view, the use of low obligation modality shows a careful interpersonal attitude.

On the other hand, Yemeni learners were observed to use direct imperatives more often, like "Eat with me" and "Have a bite of this cake," though some of them were also using interrogatives, like "Can you eat this piece of the cake with me?". Directness in this case does not mean lack of respect, but can serve to express hospitality and an intention to make closer social ties. This understanding correlates well with Al-Hamzi et al. (2020)

and Al Marrani & Suraih (2019) and is supported by Eggins' (2004) idea that moods should be interpreted with regard to the context.

Another similar pattern was seen in Situation 2 where students were supposed to invite their fellow students to have breakfast with them in a college restaurant. In the case of Indonesian speakers, they still preferred the use of yes/no questions and statements expressing willingness, for example, "Would you like to eat our breakfast together, please?" In this case, the learner seems to have maintained his/her preference to use language that softens an invitation even if it is towards peers who enjoy a relatively equal status with him/her. The Yemeni speakers, on the other hand, tended to use imperatives like "Eat breakfast with me" and "Come and eat breakfast with me." These types of invitational language tend to express solidarity and not authority.

In the third situation, where learners had to invite a staff member for a trip, both groups became more aware of the asymmetry in social relationships. Indonesian students relied predominantly on yes/no interrogatives and expressions of willingness, as in "Would you like to come with me to Malang?" In this way, it is possible to give more options to the invitee and control the difference in social position through modality. Yemeni students also relied more on interrogative structures, for example "Do you like to come with me to Ibb?" Nevertheless, imperatives and declarative expressions of intention such as "I want you to join me in Ibb" still occur. In other words, it appears that students negotiated institutional hierarchy in addition to their personal closeness. The results coincide with the ideas expressed by Pateda (1990) who believes that speech acts are determined not only by universal rules but also by cultural and situational context.

In Situation 4, where one is asked to invite a neighbor to watch a movie, one can see that invitation techniques depend on the type of interpersonal situation. Indonesian learners tended to use indirect ways like interrogatives and the expression of willingness – "Are you interested in watching a movie with me?". The choice of this technique may indicate a preference for giving the addressee an opportunity to react to an invitation without any pressure. However, Yemeni learners also used interrogatives such as "Can you come to watch TV?", but imperatives were often used. There was also a possibility of using declarative statements such as "It will be enjoyable if you visit me." This difference indicates that familiarity may affect the amount of directness, but it does not exclude general preferences of the groups. In the framework of Global Englishes, the above-mentioned diversity illustrates the use of different linguistic means to achieve mutual understanding (Jenkins & Panero, 2024).

In Situation 5, where students are invited to a teacher's place, there was an even greater contrast in social hierarchy. Both of the samples demonstrated the use of politeness devices; however, the forms in which they were used varied from group to group. Indonesian speakers regularly used interrogatives, expressions of willingness, and performative techniques, along with explicit politeness markers. For instance, "Could you please come to my party tomorrow evening?" includes the use of interrogative, modal could, and please to show respect and lessen the force of invitation. This selection corresponds to the increased social distance involved in addressing a teacher. Yemeni speakers tried to show their respect using mitigation, for example, "Please, come and join us at our party." However, imperative structures were still rather common. In such cases, the addition of please does not change the grammatical construction of the sentence but makes it more polite.

Altogether, the five situations reveal a stable pragmatic orientation among Indonesian learners toward indirectness, negative politeness, and face protection, whereas Yemeni learners consistently privilege directness, solidarity, and affiliative immediacy, even in hierarchical contexts. From an SFL perspective, these differences reflect distinct realisations of tenor through mood and modality choices. As Spradley's (2016) ethnographic and componential approach suggests, the same grammatical

resources may index different social meanings across cultures.

All in all, these findings confirm that variation in EFL pragmatic performance is not indicative of linguistic deficiency but rather of culturally embedded meaning-making practices. English, in this sense, functions as a flexible semiotic resource through which learners construct interpersonal meanings in contextually appropriate ways. The study therefore supports a shift in EFL pedagogy beyond native-speaker norms toward a

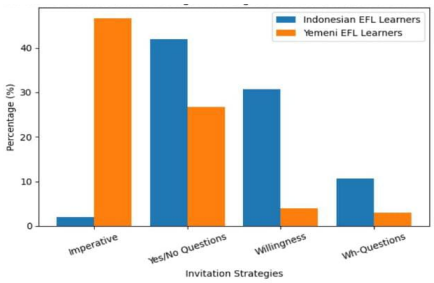


Figure 2. Distribution of Invitation Strategies among Indonesian and Yemeni EFL Learners

culturally and functionally informed understanding of pragmatic competence in diverse communicative environments.

In addition, discourse-based pragmatics further reinforces these interpretations. For instance, Agbo et al. (2026) find that in the context of Nigerian home movie discourse, the use of directives is culturally shaped by street culture, informal hierarchies, and interactional norms aimed at survival. In this case, pragmatics arises as a consequence of contextual interpretation, rather than syntactic mitigation. The findings are consistent with the Yemeni learners' use of imperatives not as a way of imposition but as an affiliative strategy. Similarly, Revita et al. (2025) found that Minangkabau directive and pre-request strategies are culturally shaped by values such as respect, harmony, and indirectness, with preparatory acts performed according to hierarchy and relational sensibility. These values correspond well with the use of Indirect strategies by Indonesian learners.

Further empirical support is provided by general cross-cultural pragmatics research. Specifically, Lu (2001), Dlali (2001), and Li & Wongwaropakorn (2024) found that speech act realization and politeness systems vary between cultures, challenging claims of universality of pragmatic categories. Lu (2001) found, for example, Sino-American differences in communication norms, while Dlali (2001) showed the non-equivalency of negative politeness in isiXhosa. Li & Wongwaropakorn (2024) found that refusals are shaped by values such as harmony and relational sensibility. These results confirm the idea that the differences observed among Indonesians and Yemenis are not errors but culturally different pragmatic systems.

In terms of their use of situational variables, Indonesian and Yemeni learners demonstrate sensitivity to situational variables like hierarchy, familiarity, and social distance. Indonesian learners systematically use interrogative and willingness forms in hierarchical contexts, thus achieving maximal mitigation and minimal imposition. Yemeni learners also show sensitivity to hierarchy by using imperatives but often softened with politeness expressions like "please."

In light of the above discussion on Global Englishes and EMI, the findings are compatible with those made by Rose et al. (2022). In particular, English is considered a multilingual communicative resource whose uses are shaped by local epistemologies. This is also consistent with Widodo et al. (2022), who emphasize that English communicative practices have to be culturally understood. In other words, Indonesian and Yemeni learners create legitimate pragmatic systems of English rather than deviating from an ideal model of English language use. First, the results demonstrate that invitations are culturally created interpersonal acts that cannot be explained simply through the use of grammatical forms. Indonesian learners tend to construct invitations indirectly, modally, and through face-preserving strategies, while Yemeni learners do so through directness and immediate affiliation. At the same time, these constructions are flexible and adapted to situational conditions. Second, from the perspective of Global Englishes and SFL, the findings support the idea that interpersonal meaning is culturally constructed through different uses of mood and modality. In this sense, they are consistent with the SFL-based

conception of linguistic meaning (Llinares & McCabe, 2023). Moreover, these findings contribute to the growing literature arguing for culturally sustaining linguistic analysis (Sembiante & Tian, 2021).

Conclusion

One of the most essential aspects of speech acts is that they belong to the socio-cultural and moral sphere of life, and they are achieved via language. Among other pragmatic speech acts, invitations are especially revealing in regard to the speaker's intention to engage the addressee in social and institutional participation, be it a spoken or written act. The present paper analyzes strategies for making invitations by Indonesian and Yemeni EFL learners in five situation-based contexts, paying particular attention to interpersonal meaning-making, politeness orientation, and cultural norms encoded in English.

The results revealed clear-cut cross-cultural differences in strategies for inviting someone. Indonesian learners tended to choose indirect forms, using Yes/No interrogatives, willingness expressions, and Wh-questions, sometimes supplemented with politeness markers such as please and excuse me. On the contrary, Yemeni learners preferred direct imperative constructions along with Yes/No questions, which showed that in Yemeni culture directness was a marker of solidarity and inclusiveness, unlike imposition in other cultures. These differences can be explained from the viewpoint of functional pragmatic categories, where the differences are related to realization of interpersonal meanings via certain grammatical categories encoding culturally specific social relationships.

All this provides evidence that pragmatic behavior in English as a global language does not occur homogeneously but depends on culturally embedded systems of meaning-making. Besides, the data show that EFL learners rely on first-language pragmatic norms when making invitations in English, resulting in systematic variations in mood usage, modality selection, and pragmatic lexicology. Thus, pragmatic transfer in English as a global lingua franca should not be seen as an error but as culturally grounded pragmatic behavior.

From the perspective of linguistic and cultural implications, it becomes obvious that grammatical categories such as mood and modality, apart from being structural choices, are used to achieve interpersonal meanings associated with politeness, authority, etc. At the same time, politeness is culturally dependent, which means that what may seem as directness in one cultural environment may actually mean solidarity in another. This highlights the significance of culturally based interpretation of communication.

At the same time, the study has certain pedagogical implications. Grammar competence is not enough for successful communication in English as a second language; learners must also have pragmatic competence. Intercultural communication can suffer greatly from a lack of awareness of sociopragmatic variability because even if learners use correct grammatical structures, there might be some unwanted interpretations of their messages due to wrong pragmatic norms. Thus, it is essential to teach EFL learners pragmatic competence to communicate in a globally oriented world.

However, despite its value for the field, the current study has certain limitations. First of all, the sample is relatively small and limited to certain social contexts. Also, written elicitation responses are far from real-life oral discourse. Moreover, analyzing only five hypothetical situations narrows the scope of the study and focuses on only one type of speech acts. Finally, the limitation may be in the use of a single theoretical perspective for the analysis.

It would be valuable for future research to include more participants from other cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Also, using spontaneous speech samples or role-playing tasks could help make the findings ecologically valid. Analyzing more than just invitation-making strategies and including more speech acts would provide a better overview of pragmatic behavior. Additionally, combining various theoretical perspectives in the analysis could enrich results significantly.

In short, the study contributes to the field considerably.

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Appendix 1

DCT – Discourse Completion Test.

Directions:
Read each situation carefully. Put yourself in the situation described and write one appropriate invitation in English for each case in your notebook. Write exactly what you would say in a real-life interaction.

Situation 1: Inviting an Unknown Person
You are on the train and eating cake. A man/woman beside you appears as if he is feeling hungry. You want to invite him/her to share your cake. What would you say?

Situation 2: Inviting Classmates
You are having breakfast in a college restaurant. Some of your classmates come, too. You want to invite them to eat with you. What would you say?

Scenario 3: Inviting Subordinates
You will go on a trip to Ibb/Malang, and you would like to invite your staff to join you. What would you say?

Scenario 4: Inviting a Neighbor
You are briefly discussing with your neighbor a movie that you watched on television last night, and you'd like to invite him over to watch a movie sometime at your house. What would you say?

Situation 5: Inviting a Teacher
You are going to have a small party at this time. You would like to invite your teacher. What would you say?